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ANTI-AMERICANISM IN FRANCE
—Robert Barrat

THE Commonweal

THE BOWERY TODAY
John McKeon

AN ISLAND OF CATHOLICISM
Douglas Hyde

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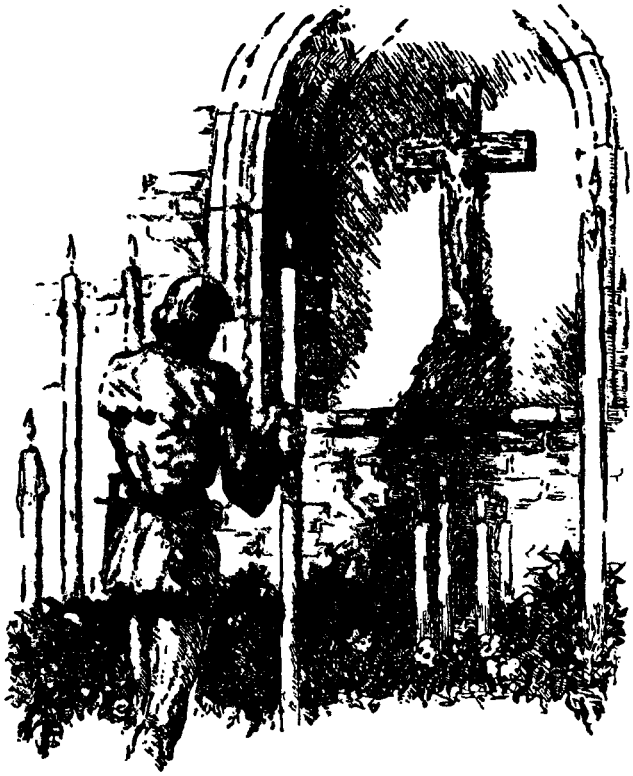

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THE Commonweal

week by week

THE PASSING OF THE VISIONARIES

IF America has any mystique, an essential part of it is practicality, a quality long associated in the public mind with the businessman. Critics of what the advertisers call "the American way" have not been lacking, but over the years most citizens have looked with an admiring—if not a loving—eye on the successful entrepreneur.

Only in the depression was the pre-eminence of the practical man of affairs seriously threatened. Then the rosy prophecies of the representatives of business combined with the grim reality of evictions, foreclosures and bank failures to sow a great doubt about the infallible powers of the industrialist. With confidence in the ways of business never lower, when FDR needed talent, he turned not to industry or finance but to the universities, and so the Brain Trust was born.

As election after election went to the Democrats, businessmen came close to despairing of the intelligence of the American voter. But this time the man of affairs has come back into his own. The voter has redeemed himself and the professors can head back to their universities.

To the business community, news of the appointment of Charles E. Wilson as Secretary of Defense must have come as something of a symbol of their newly regained position. For certainly here was no theorist, no dreamer, but a tough-minded businessman, the head of the world's largest manufacturing corporation. Taken in conjunction with the other Eisenhower appointments, the selection of Wilson must have confirmed the fondest hopes of the business group for the new Administration.

In the midst of this rejoicing, it is interesting to speculate on what the reaction would have been to the appointment, say, of Walter Reuther to a comparable policy-making post in the government. Mr. Reuther is, in a sense, Mr. Wilson's opposite number, since he is the head of one of the world's largest industrial unions, the United Automobile Workers, and sits on the other side of the bargaining table from Mr. Wilson. Certainly his appointment by General Eisenhower could hardly have been expected. But if the impossible had happened, what would have been the reaction?

REUTHER would immediately, we suppose, have been damned out of hand as a dreamer, a wide-eyed idealist. It would be remembered, for example, that Reuther was the man who suggested that the United States allocate, not millions, but billions of dollars to work for the development of economically backward areas, in a plan that went far beyond our present Point Four commitments. That alone, we imagine, would be enough to dispose of Reuther once and for all.

If that scheme did not finish him, then there was Reuther's approach to housing. In the immediate postwar period, when housing was critically short, Reuther suggested organizing American industry to manufacture housing on a mass-production basis. His thesis was that a nation which successfully mass-produced thousands of tanks and planes to meet the exigencies of war could exercise the same talents to meet social emergencies of peace. Reuther's plan did not receive much attention at the time, and nothing came of it. But simply proposing such a scheme was probably enough to blackball Reuther permanently from the society of the "practical" men.

Not many years ago, conservatives were enjoying hearty—if occasionally somewhat anguished—laughs at the notion of providing milk every day for the Hottentots. Somehow to them this idea became a symbol of everything nonsensical and impractical.

If the question were raised today, many ideas like those advanced by Walter Reuther would be dismissed by them in much the same fashion. Yet in this failure to grasp the need for daringly imaginative action lies the clue to the essential failure of the "practical" men in the twentieth century.

America has been the prime beneficiary of two revolutionary currents in modern history. One centered around the ideal of individual liberty, of free-

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dom under law and the dignity of the human person. The other current of change culminated in the Industrial Revolution, the meaning of which in this context can be easily summarized: where for centuries bare subsistence or occasional starvation was the rule for millions, it is now possible for everyone to have enough to eat. Once that possibility of sufficiency had been established, all chance to rest was lost until the goal is reached. One way or another the Hottentot children *will* have their milk.

These two currents, toward greater political freedom and toward less economic dependence, are not antagonistic but tend to converge, since one without the other is sure to lose much of its driving force. During the past two decades, the goal of the visionaries and the dreamers has been to assist and channel these two revolutionary trends.

Now the dreamers have been sent elsewhere to dream their dreams, at least for the time being. But the "practical" men should make no mistake about it—forces of profound change are at work in the world, and they are part and parcel of the history of our time. They can be slowed or sidetracked, but to think they can be halted, either here in the U. S. or elsewhere, would be a tragic mistake.

Because it is hard for them to see that the audacious approach is frequently also the most practical, this is unfortunately the kind of mistake to which "practical" men are most prone. Now that they are back in the seats of power, only time will tell whether or not they have learned their lesson during the long years in exile.

THE CARDINALS-DESIGNATE

THE first Consistory held by Pope Pius XII, in 1946, was widely noted for the historic changes it effected in the composition of the Sacred College: for the first time in history the Italian members were reduced to a minority, and non-European Catholicism, both Asian and American, was honored by strengthened representation.

During the last six years, the membership of the College has been greatly reduced, and there has recently been increased speculation on the probability of a new Consistory. The announcement that the Holy Father will hold a Consistory in January was, therefore, not unexpected, and there is universal joy among Catholics that in this period of terrible trial for the Church the number of its Cardinals will again be brought to full strength.

In the announcement of the new Cardinals, some will inevitably be surprised and some disappointed. Undoubtedly many had expected that the number of American Cardinals would be increased, or at least held constant with the five this country had after the first Consistory of Pius XII's reign. But, instead, the Holy Father has seen fit to hold the number of American Cardinals to four.

Again, there were those who hoped that the Church in the Far East might be strengthened through the choice of Cardinals from areas like India and the Near East. Instead, the Pope has strengthened the Church in traditionally Catholic lands. But it is he who has care of the whole world, and he is guided in such decisions by what he believes is the long-range good of the Church. This good, he apparently felt, called for such strengthening at this time.

NEXT WEEK

MARTIN TURNELL writes about the letters between Andre Gide and Paul Claudel (in a special movies issue).

"The real interest of the correspondence is not theological but human. It is interesting for the portraits of the two combatants and as a strange, fascinating and somewhat repellent exercise in that particular kind of moral and intellectual strip-tease at which the French excel. Claudel is harsh, violent, rigid and intolerant; Gide supple, elusive, vain and treacherous. Claudel is the better of the two. There is a warmth in his friendship which we never find in Gide's and he is much more conscious of his shortcomings . . ."

THE HIGH COST OF CAMPAIGNS

THE effectiveness of television in the recent Presidential campaign has expanded electioneering costs to a new dimension. At $33,000 per half hour it does not take long for the figures to mount; staying within the legal limit for campaign expenditures gets harder and harder without resorting to dodges of various sorts.

As a result, there is growing support for the idea of curtailing the duration of our major political campaigns. The choice lies between shorter campaigns and higher campaign expenditures (unless we wink at ingenious devices for getting round such limitations as the three-million-dollar maximum on expenditures by any single political committee).

Attractive as the shorter campaign idea appears from a negative angle, it suffers from one grave defect. It would inevitably give too heavy an advantage to the nationally better known of two candidates—with the result that prominence for whatever

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reason would overshadow fitness for the office still further.

The closing weeks of a campaign like the last one do tax many a citizen's patience, but, even as a candidate reiterates his positions on this issue and that, a man who is only becoming well known to the generality of the electorate is enabled to reach more and more individual voters for the first time. The final weeks do help to clarify for all voters his character and his sense of judgment. To cut down the length of our campaigns is, therefore, no step to be taken lightly.

On the other hand, mounting campaign costs create other obstacles to the securing for office of the best available candidate. They tend to restrict the choice to men of great wealth or to men from wealthy social and professional circles. New means to limit interested contributions must be found. To say that the cost of an election like the last one was less than a dollar per voter obscures the fact that TV now makes it possible to get immediate results from the expenditure of huge sums to a degree never before possible in the United States.

"SECTARIAN CONFLICT"

As might have been expected, the Catholic Bishops' 1952 statement, with its strictures against the secularist influence in our national life, has evoked wide comment. This comment has, unfortunately, been divided along largely sectarian lines. Praised in the Catholic press as a necessarily strong warning against a pernicious influence on American culture, the statement has, on the other hand, been criticized by a number of non-Catholic spokesmen as further evidence for their fears of a Catholic threat to the nation's free institutions.

These criticisms have not come only from forthright defenders of the secularist position; they have also been made by leaders of non-Catholic religious thought who share the Bishops' hostility to a rampant secularism. Bishop Horace Donegan, of the Protestant Episcopal diocese of New York, for example, is a man who can certainly not be accused of anti-Catholic or pro-secularist bias, yet he has expressed his fears lest the implications of the Bishops' statement, if given their logical application, would radically undermine the religiously neutral character of our public schools.

Such fears, expressed openly by so eminent a man, cannot be dismissed by Catholics as mere POAU propaganda. They are evidence, rather, of the deep misunderstandings which divide even those who should be united on matters of mutual self-interest. For the Church-State controversy in this country has become so beclouded by basic misunderstandings, by reciprocal fears and recriminations, that its intelligent discussion and resolution sometimes seem almost hopeless. These fears must be eliminated, and their elimination calls for a re-examination of conscience, of past conduct and present motives, by all those to whom the controversy is of moment.

A remarkable beginning toward such a re-examination was made by Mr. Will Herberg in an article on "The Sectarian Conflict Over Church and State," which appeared in the November issue of *Commentary*, the distinguished monthly published by the American Jewish Committee. In this article Mr. Herberg addressed his observations primarily to his own Jewish co-religionists, but they have a wider applicability.

What Mr. Herberg deplores as the basis of our misunderstandings is that the conflict has become a "sectarian" one on all sides, and not least of all on the side of the Secularists. Because of a climate of sectarian bitterness, real issues have been obscured and false loyalties created. Fearing above all else the image of a triumphant Catholicism, Protestant and Jewish leaders have frequently made common cause with a pervasive secularism. The Church-State issue has thus been reduced, in many non-Catholic minds, to a struggle against the pretensions of the "Roman Hierarchy."

Mr. Herberg suggests that non-Catholic religious leaders who, as a result of this, have entered into an alliance with the forces of secularism have mistaken their real enemy; he also suggests that Catholics might well recognize that they have sometimes contributed to the confusion. To clarify the situation he makes some suggestions: American Catholics must realize the deep suspicion with which they are regarded by a large segment of the American people, and admit, at least to themselves, that there is considerable historical justification for such suspicion. They would be well advised, he says, to moderate their demands in the field of education and to curb exhibitions of ecclesiastical power in politics. American Protestants and Jews, he writes, should strive to overcome a defensive psychology, which makes fear of Rome the inverse criterion of everything they think and do. In this way they may be saved from surrendering large areas of public life to the Secularists.

We think that these suggestions are valuable ones, and that the Catholic-Protestant-Jewish re-examinations of conscience should be undertaken by the Secularists too. What is required from all groups is the renunciation of any narrowly sectarian advantage in this question and an increase of mutual charity.

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CATHOLICS AND EGGHEADS

THE relations between American Catholics and American eggheads have long been full of tensions and misunderstandings. Catholics, for their part, have felt themselves cut off from the intellectual mainstreams of America life. With outstanding exceptions, of course, American Catholics have huddled together and laboriously built up a ghetto culture in the United States which dutifully fashions itself after its "secular" models while it remains wistfully aloof.

We have our Catholic literary and poetry groups and just about every manner of Catholic academic society and learned quarterly, and they parallel the larger cultural activities of the "seculars." We have Catholic versions of the *Reader's Digest,* the Book of the Month Club and Rotary (to name only a few) which are frankly modeled after their secular prototypes.

Occasionally, as with the books of Father Merton or Bishop Sheen, some cultural expression of Catholicism breaks out of the ghetto and passes into the "secular" stream—and then Catholics are pleased and, if the truth be told, a little flattered. But the general tendency is to go along with the culture-within-a-culture pattern, with Catholics doing most of their talking to each other.

It is, of course, part of the genius of Catholicism to baptize cultural forms. There is no special reason, for instance, why the comic book should not be used for the greater honor and glory of God. But it seems to me that there is a difference between this kind of "baptism" and the "substitution" mentality by which Catholics imitate the ways of the "seculars" while they withdraw their influence (and the Christian leavening it could mean) from the nation's cultural life.

In the first case—where Catholic participation breathes the soul of Christianity into secular structures —the motivation for cultural activity is apostolic in the widest sense; in the second, it is the defensive attitude of the besieged.

In any case, that is the situation—Catholics are cut off from the general cultural scene, and the occasional maverick who wanders off the reservation is often regarded with suspicion by his fellow Catholics and with wonder by the "secular" eggheads, who are likely to dub him immediately as a "liberal Catholic"—meaning, of course, a Catholic who surprises them by not scorning all "secular" values and who is as interested as they in the broad welfare of the community.

In his *Witness,* Chambers made out a vigorous case for the Absolutes, and it was that more than any other point in his long book which the egghead critics pounced upon. Chambers held that belief in God and in an unchanging moral order is the only way to political salvation. Many among the critics found this indeed a hard saying. In their rejection of the Chambers' (and incidentally, on this point at least, the Catholic) view of things, the eggheads gave the tip-off on their fears.

The modern, self-consciously "intellectual" American spirit is profoundly secularist, profoundly skeptical; shaped as it was by the forces of a naive scientism, philosophical liberalism and a residual Christianity, it is a complex of almost antagonistic ingredients. It admires the pragmatic accomplishments of Christianity (the works of mercy, the practical altruism of a Dorothy Day or an Albert Schweitzer) while it looks upon the mystical content of Christianity with neither understanding nor admiration.

A Dorothy Day dispensing clothing to the poor or demanding a just wage for exploited workers gains its sympathy; a Dorothy Day "picketing" St. Joseph for funds or kneeling in prayer in the parish church is merely baffling. There is an "absolutist" overtone to this kind of faith which the modern mind finds hard to take. Even in the case of the much-admired Simone Weil, it is the skeptical aspects of her mysticism, not unwavering faith, which is admired.

Belief, to the modern, implies "absolutism," and "absolutism" means more than belief. It suggests a temperament, a dogmatic disposition, a narrow unenquiring spirit which, if it had its way, would have disastrously blocked all progress, all scientific enquiry, all unconventional artistic effort. The way this temperament is conceived of, it would have applied the unbending orthodoxy of faith to every aspect of modern life, so that while men might have the consolation of thinking they basked in the blinding light of religious truth, they would surely have walked in the murky darkness of political, social and artistic reaction. The ghosts of the Inquisition haunt the modern's view of the Catholic Church, and he feels that the Catholic as such has no contribution to make to intellectual life today because he is hopelessly wedded to yesterday.

The Catholic, I think, senses this suspicion. In the face of such wholesale rejection of the values he cherishes most, in view of the hostile atmosphere of modern secular culture, he withdraws into the cozy friendliness of his cultural ghetto. When he does look at the outer world, too often it is only to cast disapproving eyes on what is going on, to condemn error or bewail the absence of the religious spirit which is locked up behind the walls he himself has erected.

The Catholic—with the sophistication that his ancient religion gives him—looks upon the egghead "infidels," playthings of the cultural winds of their times, as softheaded. The egghead—wrestling energetically with the problems of his day—looks upon the Catholics as stiffnecked men born out of time.

JOHN COGLEY.

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The Bowery Today

BECAUSE "IT IS EASY TO SLEEP ON ANOTHER MAN'S WOUND," AN EVER-INCREASING NUMBER OF AGED AND UNSKILLED WILL END UP ON SKID ROW

JOHN Mc KEON

THE man bled quietly. Sprawled full length and face down on the matting of rain-soaked and flattened cardboard cartons that littered the loading platform of the deserted loft building, he looked curiously at ease, comforted, as though the fate that had come upon him as the result of some unknown and random violence had not only been expected, but accounted for and welcomed in his reckoning. The cuts on his face would probably be entered in the ambulance attendant's scrawl as "multiple lacerations face and head" but they would not be the main entry and the blood they leaked was not what was letting the life out of him. The gray paper color of his face beneath the encrusted grime and growth of beard, the pinched waxiness of the nostrils and the phlegmy rattle of air deep in his throat betokened a graver and more hidden wound: shock, following a possible skull fracture.

One block away, to the east, a noisy Third Avenue El train rattled along above the Bowery and a few doors up the street the portals of the Men's Municipal Lodging House stood empty in the thin, penetrating drizzle. The street itself, which would normally have been filled with the bustle and commerce of the hundreds of small business lofts it housed on a week day, was deserted save for the small knot of interested bystanders that surrounded the prone figure: a patrolman, the huge and shapeless embodiment of law and order in glistening raincape and boots; two cops from a prowl car; the ambulance attendant and driver, and a handful of casual wayfarers. There was nothing especially memorable about the scene. Every New Yorker has, at some time or another, run across a similar one in the neighborhood of the Bowery. The props are interchangeable and only the cast differs. There is always a figure lying prone, usually random splashes of blood, a prowl car, bystanders, confused conversation from witnesses and the curtain always comes down with the admonition, "Awright now, break it up, break it up," and the audience wanders off; mildly entertained and titillated at the unshared misfortune and their own capacity for unaided ambulation.

The patrolman on duty flipped shut his fat notebook and conversed briefly with the prowl car driver while the ambulance attendant prepared to load the victim. The victim was a vagrant. No identification. He had been slashed about the face and head with an edged weapon and struck at the base of the skull, probably with the traditional "blunt instrument": bottle, brick or pipe. No apparent motive. Robbery was out of the question. There were no witnesses. A passerby had phoned in a report of a man bleeding on the street. Possibly the Municipal Lodging House might have some information about him. If not, he would merely join the nameless scores who meet a casual death along the Bowery each year via alcohol, violence or exposure, and no further questions would be asked by anyone, except perhaps a routine Missing Persons inquiry from some other city that would be filed and returned months later stamped with the notice: "No Trace Of." The city itself would be unaware of the passing except in the aggregate known as "The Bowery Problem."

The Bowery has been a familiar problem to the taxpayers of New York for well over fifty years. Despite spasmodic efforts on the part of succeeding city administrations to "clean it up" it still remains a synonym for filth, degradation and despair.

The New York Police Department estimates the population of the Bowery at some eighteen thousand men and six hundred women. These figures are based on the number of cases processed at the Municipal Lodging

Mr. McKeon, who has done editorial work in the Catholic press, is now doing free-lance writing in New York.

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Houses plus estimates of those housed at various missions, hotels and "flop houses" along the Bowery proper. Along the Bowery there are more than fifty hotels with a hundred-bed capacity or better and a price range of forty to seventy-five cents for a night's lodging.

In such establishments, the majority of the patrons are over fifty years of age. This in itself is a significant statistic. Taken in conjunction with the fact that two-thirds of the population of the Bowery find seasonal employment in mountain resorts and railroad maintenance camps during the summer, a new aspect is brought to light. The Bowery is more to be looked on as an old man's home than a refuge or final resting place for alcoholics.

Police estimates of the number of chronic alcoholics, psychotics, drug addicts and unemployables (sic) among the Bowery population range from fifteen hundred to two thousand. And while two thousand alcoholics do not make a Bowery, they go a long way toward forming the general public's attitude toward it. In the case of the Bowery, as in many another sub-culture divorced from the main stream and yet economically dependent on it, the more obvious and aggressive elements have succeeded in capturing the larger public's attention, and society has been more or less satisfied to have it so.

To the average New Yorker, the Bowery is a refuge for alcoholics; alcoholics are, in the final analysis, responsible for their predicament, in its inception if not its conclusion. Therefore it follows that men on the Bowery are there because they want to be, or deserve to be, and as such are unworthy of sympathy. For people who think this way, it is irksome to be confronted with the fact that the majority of men on the Bowery are not there because they want to be, and not because they deserve to be, but are, in large part, victims of an industrial system that chooses younger men over workers in the middle-age-and-older bracket when casual and unskilled workers are needed. And the simple fact is that the majority of men on the Bowery are both past middle years and unskilled.

The Holy Name Mission for Homeless Men on Bleecker Street gave twelve thousand five hundred individual interviews during the past year to homeless men who were seeking meal tickets, clothes, hotel tickets or jobs. The majority of these men were fifty years of age or over, and this may be taken as par for the homeless and indigent along the Bowery, since many of the same men, through economic necessity, are also on the lists of Salvation Army and other denominational charity rolls and may be taken for the sum total of the city's homeless poor.

Not everyone along the Bowery is both homeless and poor, or at any rate unemployed. Between four and five thousand men and women past middle years live permanently in Bowery hotels and eat along the Bowery because their incomes do not permit living and eating anywhere else. Many have part time or casual jobs, and many are old age pensioners who can afford no better. Thus there are thousands of the aged and largely unemployable poor who are left to make the best life they can along the Bowery.

"TO help the poor," St. Vincent de Paul said, "one must first give them a life that they are conscious of." This the City of New York has notably failed to do with the population of the Bowery.

For fifty years, with the notable exception of the Camp La Guardia experiment for the rehabilitation of alcoholics, the only attention paid to the social and physical predicament of the Bowery's population has been negative. From time to time, throughout various city administrations, the wails of an outraged citizenry against the wave of muggings, molestations of woman and assault cases, have prodded the Police Department into half-hearted attempts to "clean it up." But the bulk of the city's crime has its roots elsewhere than the Bowery, and the city's police have been well aware of that fact. As a result, beyond the arrest of a score or two alcoholics on charges of vagrancy and creating a public nuisance, the situation was left as it was.

In cold fact, neither the city nor the state has the physical equipment necessary to "clean up the Bowery." Hospitals, jails and institutions for the aged are not only operating at capacity already but in most instances at considerably less than necessary efficiency due to lack of space, personnel and equipment. A wholehearted attempt to clean up the Bowery would not only wreck the already creaking penal and hospital system of the City of New York but also the entire budget of the Public Welfare Department, which has already been pared to the bone against the anticipated howls of a tax-conscious citizenry.

THIS result, of course, would be separate from the ruin that would be visited on reputable business firms. Several hundred of these now leech a living from the present misery of the Bowery via bars, flophouses, pawnshops, liquor shops and beaneries.

Frankly geared to the economic status of the Bowery population, the price range of the services these various businesses render stands as a monument to the ability

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of our civilization to tailor price to need and still profit. One can get a night's lodging for as little as forty cents in a frank "crumb house" or a bed relatively free of animal life for seventy-five cents in a "better class hotel." Since the physical facilities and furnishings are the same in both, barring the animal life (a six by four foot cubicle roofed with chicken wire and containing a cot and a chair), the price differential can only be attributed to the high cost of insecticide. The restaurants, affectionately known by their patrons as "horse markets" because of their suspected propensity for selling horseflesh for beef, offer a number of moderately priced entrees on their menus: Lung Goulash 25c; Pig Snouts and Beans 40c; Pig Tails and Beans 35c; Ham Shank and Sauerkraut 55c; and Hash and Onions 25c.

Haircuts and shaves are as low as ten cents in the various "Barber Colleges" and there are still bars where nickel beer may be had. Prostitutes charge from twenty-five cents to a dollar for their services, and drug peddlers specialize in cut-rate soporifics: sodium amytal capsules known as "Blue Angels" retail for ten cents apiece and "Yellow Jacks" (or nembutal capsules) sell for fifteen cents. Taken in conjunction with a pint of forty-cent wine known under the generic title of "Sneaky Pete" they are a favorite form of involuntary suicide among Bowery alcoholics during the winter months.

For the indigent vagrant who is anxious to raise a quick stake, an open air Flea Market flourishes on Rivington Street; there, if he can find a buyer (and he often does), he can sell the clothes off his back. Failing this there is always the traffic in human blood, whereby a vagrant can sell a pint of his blood to one of the various blood banks at five dollars a pint (free of spirochetes and up to the necessary red cell count) to be resold to patients in private hospitals at thirty dollars per pint.

TO this aggregate of human misery that stretches from Brooklyn Bridge to Fourteenth Street along Third Avenue and embraces eighteen thousand people, the City of New York has given less consistent attention than it has to its traffic problems. The passage of the Narcotics Act in 1917 closed the "opium dens" but the "pill pads" and "tea pads," flats specializing in services for barbiturate and marijuana addicts, still remain. So do the bars just below Fourteenth Street that cater exclusively to homosexuals, replete with "barmaids" and "hostesses." The non-denominational missions continue to exploit the misfortune of their patrons for the tourist trade; and the "night clubs" still exhibit the antics of derelict alcoholics for the amusement and edification of their uptown patrons; the rubberneck tours, the flop houses, the cheap restaurants, the tattoo parlors advertising leeches for black eyes, the corner rallies of various religious sects—all are still there. Out of it all has come no hope for "John Bum" that his problems stand some chance of being either understood or solved.

The Irish have a proverb which says, "It is easy to sleep on another man's wound," and New York City and the country at large have slept easily on the problems of the alcoholic and the aged poor. We have, like a restaurant owner, more or less chalked them up to breakage, along with the half million institutionalized for mental disorders, the quarter of a million tuberculars, the two hundred thousand felons and the hundred thousand spastics, except that infinitely more money is spent on the other categories for research and rehabilitation.

Yet the problem is far from hopeless, and money spent for ameloriation of the Bowery's plight would not be money down the drain. It is not too much to hope that the City of New York will sometime find it possible to erect even one housing project set aside specifically for the aged (the London City Council has already opened several). Nor is it wild dreaming to look for the day when the necessary funds will be found to have at least one psychiatrist and one psychologist in each Municipal Lodging House, in an attempt to cope with the problems of alcoholics. Certainly a mass rehabilitation center for alcoholics like the late Camp La Guardia might well be reactivated, with greater emphasis this time on psychiatric treatment and more effort to reintegrate the individual into the economic system upon his departure.

It is possible also that in time there will be a closer liaison between social service agencies for the aged and the medical profession regarding the social implications of the advances in the science of geriatrics. As with many another scientific advance, all too little attention has been paid by government agencies to the social implications of "the science of old age."

The Bowery of today is only the forerunner for bigger and better Boweries all over the nation if some really radical steps are not taken by Federal, state and city governments regarding social security benefits and housing conditions for the aged poor. Failing these, the Bowery is the probable fate of an ever increasing number of aged and unskilled New Yorkers, among whom, since "time and chance happeneth to every man," may be counted many of us who have heretofore slept easily on the Bowery's wound.

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FROM FRANCE

The Current of Anti-Americanism

IN THE heat of their election campaign Americans doubtless paid little heed to certain remarks of Edouard Herriot which had terrific repercussions over here. What he said was neither very new nor very original. General de Gaulle has been saying the same thing for two years with infinitely more force and clarity.

But the old leader of the Radical Socialists appears to have become the political conscience of France, especially since 1945. Of a France which is no longer that of Louis XIV or even of Poincaré. Of a France that is down at the heels, fond of belles lettres and a pipe. Of a France cast in the image of the Radical Party. The President of the National Assembly has for several years typified that wisdom without swagger, common sense strictly limited by practical considerations, that has to be the rule for a country exhausted by two horrible wars and worn out by all the problems it has to face.

President Herriot advised the meeting of the Radical Party at Bordeaux that the project of a European army —which French governments have been working on for two years and ratified this past May—constitutes a grave threat to the Republic. And the French people themselves were suddenly confronted with the most fantastic discoveries: the treaty violates the Constitution of 1946; it means the disappearance of the French army pure and simple; it reestablishes the German army; it embodies a grave threat to peace—and so forth.

We must take the Herriot discourse seriously, whatever its partisan political motivation. To begin with, Herriot had a long visit with Premier Pinay, and almost certainly apprised him of this speech, on the day before he left for Bordeaux. This raises the question whether the French Government itself is not ready to abandon its agreement with Bonn and the treaty of Paris.

Secondly, this speech factually expresses the uneasiness which exists in French political circles about the general outlines of our present foreign policy. (For weeks Foreign Minister Schuman has been the target of attacks.) This anxiety centers on the German problem.

Basically, the problem depends on a simple question: Is the antagonism between East and West final and without solution, or is there still a chance for a compromise? Many Frenchmen, while hoping for the contrary, feel that there is really no chance for compromise and that therefore Western Germany must take her place in the defense of the West. In this case there would have to be either an independent German army or the integration of German units into a European army under a supra-national authority.

It seems to me that the United States, for lack of something better, would naturally accept the first of these alternatives. The United States has even warned France that a German army must be set up if the European army does not come into being fast enough. It seems pointless to repeat that France finds this wholly unacceptable.

The Pleven Plan of two years ago was nothing but a defense reaction against such an eventuality. And when the actual treaty is compared with the original plan, it is readily seen that France has made many concessions to the NATO experts and to pressure from the United States. Instead of integrating German units of battalion size, which would have forestalled the creation of large German army units, the basis for integration was changed first to combat teams of six thousand men and then to national army corps.

Herriot

Besides, with the war in Indo-China, difficulties in North Africa and the threat of inflation, France fears that she will rapidly be outclassed by Western Germany. The latter is to have twelve divisions, compared to fourteen for France. But will France be able to equip these fourteen divisions, except on paper?

What is there to prevent Germany two or three years hence, aided by the Americans, who seek primarily an effective bastion against the Russians, from breaking the fragile lock and dominating Europe in a military sense? There would always be the possibility, too, of Germany's dragging the coalition into a war to recapture her lost territories to the East.

That is why many French political leaders, despite their support of the European army idea, believe the time has come to obtain more serious guarantees against its hidden dangers and to fortify themselves against our own weaknesses. Some call for increased aid in Indo-China (Edgar Faure). Others insist on a British guarantee against an eventual German threat of aggression (the French Socialists). All demand—and it is the only point on which there is political unanimity—the creation of a high political authority which will hold in check the international high command of the European army.

Much depends, of course, on the foreign policy of the new Republican Administration. But, speaking personally, I believe that there are certain constant elements in American attitudes toward Europe and that in the

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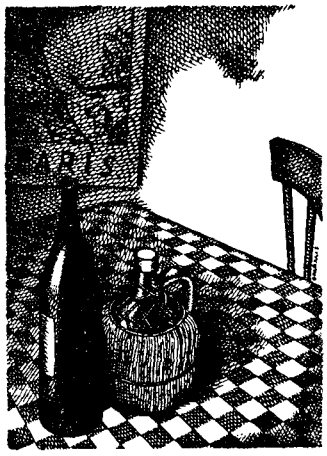
end, after many difficulties, the German army will see the light of day.

BUT return to the supposition that a modus vivendi between East and West is still possible—something such as peaceful coexistence with local arrangements about Austria and Germany. Then Germany will be either united, independent and armed—or united, neutralized and disarmed. The Russians have proposed both questions. If the French understandably find little to attract them in the first, many believe that negotiation is still possible on the basis of the second.

On his return from East Berlin, André Denis, a deputy from the left wing of MRP, wrote in *Le Monde*: "I wanted to find out whether the USSR was still sincerely desirous of negotiating about German unity, or whether the overtures in this direction which the Soviets seemed to make had been abandoned in favor of integrating Western Germany into the Eastern bloc. My conclusions are as clear-cut as those of M. Herriot and M. Daladier; negotiation is still possible. Only the ratifications of the necessary treaties can put an end to the present state of things. On the basis of my interviews—which were somewhat contradictory as I see them—I think I am able to sum up the Soviet conditions this way: free elections, even though they would result in the setting up of a central German government with an anti-Soviet outlook, provided Germany's present Eastern boundary is accepted as permanent and all objectives of linking Germany with any military coalition whatever are renounced."



Thereupon this MRP deputy urged all those who opposed ratification of the treaty of Paris to demand a breaking off of ratification proceedings and the opening of four-power negotiations on free elections and a German peace treaty.

That is clear enough, and it is not a lone opinion. M. Daladier, Edgar Faure and many Socialists are of the same mind. For weeks there have been rumors of secret Franco-Russian negotiations on the subject. A German Socialist has declared that a secret treaty is to be drawn up. The Gaullist *Carrefour* asserts that if the new French ambassador to Moscow was granted a private audience with Stalin so quickly (while Mr. Kennan was unable to obtain one even when he was still *persona grata*), it was to discuss the German question and to put back in force the Franco-Russian agreement of 1944.

I do not have the temerity to say that all these are truthful assertions. But there is no smoke without fire and opinions such as that of André Denis have much currency today. Now let me try to explain further the growing French dislike of the North Atlantic policy.

But before that I must say more about the alternative that would replace it. The French and the other Western nations would not like that either, for the simple reason that a disarmed and united Germany would not have a national defense program to support. In no time at all Germany would be able to drive all of us—French, English, Italians, Benelux—from all markets.

The contention is that such a German solution would be but one of the elements of a general policy of restoring health to the relationships between East and West; this would permit disarmament and the restoration of normal intra-European and world-trade relations. But I honestly do not put much trust in that.

How can the present disaffection for American policy on the part of so many Frenchmen be explained? Why do you hear on all sides that "Americans are fools"? People who say that are not impassioned by pro-Soviet sympathies. Not at all. They are the very people who fear an eventual understanding with Russia and who know that ultimately Americans defend the same values to which we ourselves are wholeheartedly attached—political freedom, respect for the human person, legal justice, etc.

It is rather that to these Frenchmen American policy seems to be under a sign of contradiction, uncertainty and lack of continuity. Was it not the United States which, at Yalta, put Europe in its present position by abandoning half the Continent to Stalin?

Are not Americans, by their undiscriminating anti-colonialism, cutting down the branches on which their allies were supported? There is something disarmingly childish about the view that all peoples in the world today are equally ready for self-government and for the benefits of culture and democracy. By setting off everywhere the claims of the colonial countries, through declarations and misleading promises, the United States has contributed to the break-up of such powerful entities as the British Empire, the Dutch Indies and the French Union.

BY America's unwillingness to aid us in time, France became embroiled in the fruitless and costly war in Indo-China—which we carry on today no longer to defend our economic or strategic interests but as a contribution to the defense of the civilized world against Communism. We would a hundred times rather devote the immense sums swallowed up in this conflict to raising the wages of our workers, building homes for the homeless in France and organizing our own military defenses.

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When Americans reproach us for being slow in organizing our defense, they fail to realize that French statesmen are confronted with insoluble problems. We cannot at one and the very same time wage the Indo-China war, re-equip our army at home, modernize our antiquated industrial plant and push through a badly needed national housing program.

Americans criticize us for always begging for dollars, of going in for a sort of blackmail when they cancel their "offshore" orders for French munitions plants. But the situation is clear: Western nations are without favorable trade balances, since their loss of colonial sources of raw materials and world industrial markets, and are economically dependent on the United States.

As Raymond Cartier wrote in *Paris-Match*: "The only conceivable way of regaining a normal balance would be to sell the United States the equivalent of what we must buy from her. But she is protected by a Chinese tariff wall. America, which rightly preaches the abolishing of tariff barriers in Europe, contradicts herself, not only through the stiff duties she places on foreign merchandise but also by formidable red tape."

There is little doubt that if the American government would agree to increase American imports of goods of Western European origin, that would serve as a draught of oxygen for the anemic economy of our country. But while Europe's share in America's imports was about thirty per cent in 1938, it has now fallen to sixteen per cent.

It would be possible to prolong indefinitely this list of grievances of the French against the United States policies. France has not yet lost heart, but time is of the essence. If, in the years to come, we do not see a change on all these questions—and this depends on America alone—then, I'm afraid, the Atlantic alliance will have run its course.

Assuredly it was after having reviewed all these factors that the old fox in the Kremlin was able calmly to predict the break-up of the alliance of the capitalist countries (as he did in his recent article in *Bolshevik*). Let us not prove that he was right.

ROBERT BARRAT.

AN APPEAL

The Sisters of Mercy of the Holy Cross care for a hundred orphaned children in St. Mary's Home, Bettiah, Bihar Province, North India. Milk is lacking for all their charges; it is urgently needed for those who are pitifully undersized from malnutrition. A good cow, to provide a permanent solution for this problem, would cost the Sisters but $100. Contributions earmarked for this purpose may be sent to Jesuit Missions, 962 Madison Ave., New York, N. Y.

FROM MALTA

An Island of Catholicism

DOUGLAS HYDE

SOUTH of barren, volcanic Sicily, right out in the Mediterranean between Europe and North Africa, lies the rocky little Catholic island of Malta, which for hundreds of years was a key point in the fight to prevent all Christendom from falling into the hands of the Moslems. It is one of those strategically placed spots whose fate it is always to play a role out of all proportion to their size.

In the last war, the vast damage done to it by Mussolini's and Hitler's bombers and its people's refusal to be beaten into subjection even when they lay open and exposed to the worst that modern war could do made its name a legend and earned it the George Cross, awarded for exceptional gallantry. As before, it was a key point in the fight for the mastery of man's mind and soul.

I have just been to Malta, and all the time I was acutely aware that once again this little island is a strategic point in that same age-long struggle.

In the Middle Ages the impact of Islam hit it from the South, and the Maltese fortified their island and defeated battery, assault and seige. In World War II the blows came from the West. And the people, with death this time coming from the skies, made their homes in caves and caverns for months and years, sometimes unable to emerge for days on end as raid succeeded raid without respite.

Now the blows are coming from the East. In any armed conflict between East and West, Malta, placed beneath already partly-occupied Eastern and Central Europe, and above a North Africa in turmoil and which the Communists covet, might again be a spot of great strategic significance.

But at the moment the blows from the East take the form of ideas and influences of Marxist origin, utterly alien to Malta's Catholic thought. And there are a good many reasons why this latest, and most dangerous, invader is finding it easier to get a foothold among the three hundred thousand-strong population than did those of the past.

THERE are not many lands which can be described with accuracy as being Catholic today. I do not,

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of course, mean by that lands where all are saintly Catholics, but simply where the great mass of the people still worship as Catholics, where the whole weight of public opinion is Catholic, where the majority think as Catholics, and where no anti-Catholic or openly anti-clerical party stands a chance of gaining support.

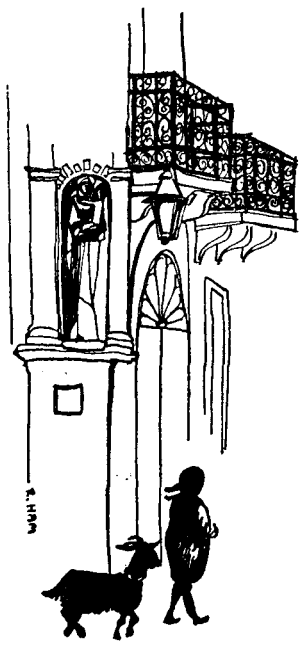
There is Ireland and there is Malta. There are not many more, if any, which would stand the test, and such strongholds of the Faith should be kept at all costs.

The Faith came to Malta when St. Paul, and, says tradition, St. Luke, were shipwrecked off its coast and spent three months upon the island. (Act XXVIII, 1-11.)

I stood the other day on the beach where that first missionary was washed ashore, and I knelt in the cavern, which has been used for the best part of twenty centuries as a church, where he sheltered and worshipped. And I recalled how through those two thousand tumultuous years, even during the past century when so many others have wholly or in part fallen away, the Maltese people have clung tenaciously to their Faith. But I was also acutely aware that no one knows what even the next short decade may see in the way of changes.

For centuries the people have practiced the Faith according to their lights, even though they may not always have understood all its implications. They have not had to defend it, other than by force of arms, and so have perhaps felt that their own particular blend of piety and gaiety was sufficient. Theology, doctrine, social teaching, all such things could be left to the priest.

And since there are a priest and a nun to every three hundred of the population, that was not altogether surprising.



Their great, gleaming, creamy-white stone churches, their colorful feast-day processions at which a cheering, laughing populace succeeds in making processions accompanied by noisy fireworks, the throwing of confetti and the crashing of brass bands all part of an act of worship, are for them the stuff of life itself.

Every sort of organization and institution, from local bands to government departments, is dedicated to the Sacred Heart. As I waited to see the Minister of Emigration and Labor, an electric votive lamp burned before a Sacred Heart picture in his waiting room. Churches are packed, Mass follows Mass for hours on end, daily Communicants are very numerous. When the congregation sings the responses to the *Te Deum* in St. John's Cathedral, Valletta, they do not really sing —they shout in exultation.

Sealed off by the Mediterranean from non-Catholic influences, they have developed the practice of their Faith along their own attractive very colorful Southern lines.

But the Mediterranean is no barrier to the materialistic influence of the cinema, the radio and the glossy magazine, which represent a culture and portray a way of life which are alien and hostile to those they have hitherto known. Those influences are gaining ground today and represent a disintegrating factor in the island's life.

There are some who say that these influences, in moderation, are necessary in order to condition the Maltese to life in the outside world, rather like an inoculation against a deadly disease. But the value of inoculation is open to question if it threatens to kill the patient with the disease against which it is supposed to be a protection.

The attractive sister of a leading figure on the island told me, without rancor, how at a wedding recently she and another bridesmaid were turned back from the church door, leaving the bride to go to the altar unattended, because they were wearing dresses with half length sleeves.

Two piece swimsuits are banned on the beaches, despite Malta's brave and justifiable attempt to attract tourists. If the English who come there object, as they sometimes do, to such restrictions, and to the impossibility of obtaining contraceptives (except surreptitiously from British Service personnel), that is just too bad. Equally, the Maltese turn a deaf ear to British assertions that the only cure for the island's acute overpopulation problem is birth control, even though they know that their refusal to accept such advice leads to a psychological resistance to their pleas for aid.

Malta remembers that she is Catholic and does not compromise on matters of morals. To such questions her approach is distinctively Catholic. But not to all questions.

IN a temperature well up in the 90's, I talked one Sunday morning to a crowded meeting of the General Workers Union, the island's biggest, all-in union.

The hall was packed with sturdy, independent, spirited dockers, employed in the British Admiralty's dockyards, a magnificent audience. All the union's rank and file are, of course, Catholics. Among their leaders there

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are some good practicing Catholics, too, though the position of others is the subject of a good deal of discussion.

I had gone to the island hoping to find a trade union which had a distinctively Catholic conception of its duties, for in my pocket I carried a copy of its journal, "The Torch," which bore a headline reading: "Arbitration on Pay Claim—Soliciting your Prayers." That, it seemed to me when I read it in London, reflected an almost unique approach on the part of a union to the workers' fight for justice.

But I found that two forces are battling for the mind and soul of the Maltese Labor Movement. One was expressed in that headline; the other seeks to fight the class-war as fiercely as anywhere else.

The movement was founded largely on the inspiration of Malta's present Archbishop, Monsignor Michael Gonzi, with the idea of protecting the island's workers. But since the war, its two wings, the industrial, trade union one, and the political one, represented by the Malta Labor Party, have swung increasingly to the Left, influenced by a socialist politician named Mintoff.

Mintoff, who heads the Labor Party and leads the official opposition in the Malta Parliament, went to Oxford on a Rhodes scholarship in the middle thirties, when the British universities were going through their pink phase. There he is said to have joined the Fabian Society, and in due course, he took up a position somewhere to the Left of Britain's Aneurin Bevan. The majority of the men and women he would have met in the Fabian Society would be agnostics, atheists or anti-clericals; secular humanists of one sort or another.

But, as a self-conscious left-winger and rebel living on a Catholic island, he has almost inevitably been driven more and more to model his activities and his philosophy on those of the Communists. His talents, his restless energy (he is said to have a tubercular spine, but he works night and day when he is not obliged to lay off), and his demogogy combined to send him rocketing to the top of the island's political circles. And his political philosophy, which owes almost everything to Marx, has seeped down steadily through the ranks of the Labor Movement.

Like the Communists, he does not hesitate to use any inflammable material he finds lying around—and there is plenty on the island, of both the political and economic varieties. Indeed, it is the island's present difficulties which have made it possible for him to become the dominant influence in a movement composed of men whose outlook in most cases is, or was, fundamentally so unlike his own.

But the situation cannot, of course, be explained in terms of one man. Malta's economy is entirely dependent upon that of Britain. Her rocky soil, her lack of any natural resources whatsoever, and her teeming population make it necessary for her to import more than ninety per cent of her food and other essentials, an impossible position for any nation.

Two-thirds of her industrial workers are directly or indirectly employed by British Service departments. Apart from these she has only a few small island-owned industrial concerns of recent origin, none of them employing more than one or two hundred workers, and, in most cases, with insufficient resources, according to their own account, to pay anything but the lowest wages. The largest is a brewery which exports beer to Egypt—the island's only export of any consequence at all.

Since the end of the war Malta has received from the United Kingdom bomb damage compensation amounting with interest to some thirty million pounds. This has been spent on rebuilding the devastated towns; it has resulted in the erection of excellent workers' flats where slums formerly stood, new churches and public buildings and full employment. It has created the illusion of prosperity.

But within the next two or three years the money will be exhausted and the relative prosperity which Malta now enjoys will come to an end. In its place, everyone realizes quite clearly, there will be mass unemployment and considerable social misery and hardship. There are no State insurance schemes, no public relief. Everyone knows the crash is coming, but no one can do anything about it. For apart from the present building operations, Malta is a one-industry country and that industry, servicing British naval vessels and catering for Service personnel, is contracting as Britain herself attempts to economize.

OFFICIAL commisions have urged, as both a short-term and a long-term relief measure, that large scale emigration should be organized. At one time it was hoped that the figure of four thousand who have left Malta each year since the last war would be pushed up to ten thousand. Experience shows that the Maltese, provided that they can go as families (for family ties are strong there), are good settlers. But today one country after another at the receiving end—Canada, Australia, the U. S.—is closing or threatening to close its doors against European migrants, including those from Malta.

Capital development is urgently needed there. But it is not forthcoming for lack of what are, by present-day standards, ridiculously small sums.

The island is chronically short of water. This leads to a parched, unproductive countryside. But it also means that industries cannot be started or extended because the necessary water would not be available for them. Yet it has been estimated that for eight million pounds, reservoirs and an irrigation scheme could be created. This would transform the entire situation,

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because annual rainfall, if conserved and distributed, is sufficient for all ordinary purposes despite five rainless months each year.

Before Malta can be fully developed industrially and agriculturally, it will be necessary to have men who have been given a technical education. Yet when the International Labor Office offered to pay for the construction of technical schools and the introduction of apprenticeship schemes in industry, the Government of Malta had to turn down the offer because it could not afford the recurrent expenditure involved in maintaining such a program.

Compulsory education was introduced under British rule, before Malta was given self-government in 1947. But Ministers admitted to me that many children are getting no more than ten hours schooling a week, and hundreds of others run the streets, getting none at all; the Government cannot afford the school premises and teachers to make universal education a reality.

This is the background of political, economic and national frustration which has made it possible for Mintoff, the Communist-influenced left-winger, to lead the Labor Movement into paths remote from those one would expect of a Catholic country. Taken over the last few years, his policies have followed in broad outline, to a significant extent, those of the Cominform itself. And there is a strong probability, unless the present trend is arrested, that he will within the next two or three years head a Labor Government.

It is in this situation that the spiritual leaders watch the workers and in particular the youth, being drawn into a movement which can and may in time destroy the island's Catholic way of life.

Britain is wrestling with her own economic problems, and the Treasury is not today launching out on new schemes involving capital expenditure. Yet a little aid from the West would be worth a lot of anti-Communist speeches in Malta.

Without that aid, Malta will head straight for economic collapse. Then Stalin may have a new ally in a little Catholic country which is still one of the strategic strongpoints in a vitally important area between East and West.

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THE STAGE

THE SEVEN YEAR ITCH

MR. George Axelrod's scabrous title refers to that seasonal recklessness which, convention would assume, afflicts men about to enter on middle life. One such victim is Mr. Axelrod's hero, a gentleman comfortably married, gainfully employed and intolerably bored. Abandoned temporarily by a vacationing wife, he succumbs to a cherished image of himself as a roué, and engages in a brief flirtation with the girl upstairs. When his third act curtain has fallen, Mr. Axelrod has managed, with considerable dexterity, both to consign his hero to the bosom of domesticity, and also to allay the irritations of the seven year itch.

The conceit is a tired one, and all Mr. Axelrod's desperate inflation, his injections of ersatz vitality, connot summon it to life. The stale odor given off by most contemporary comedy clings obstinately to "The Seven Year Itch." Nothing fresh, everything tarnished; devoid of wit, comic sensibility, an eccentric point of view—what keeps these plays going? One wonders whatever can have seduced their authors to literature—perhaps one of those advertisements in the back pages of some magazine: "How do you know you can't write? YOU'VE NEVER TRIED!"

I do not mean to slander Mr. Axelrod: he is agreeable, he is even bright. But how quickly his brightness falls from the air! When he has exhausted a certain fund of reliable humor, he must draw on his own satiric perceptions of contemporary life, and the results are shabby indeed. (A publisher who wants to issue a pocket edition of *The Scarlet Letter* called *I Was An Adulteress* is one of the author's fountains of mirth.) Cliché seems the natural climate of Mr. Axelrod's mind. It is rampant not only in his threadbare situations, but in his language: at one point, his ingenue announces that she drinks like a fish and smokes like a chimney. With a kind of horrid glee, I sat waiting for dumb as a doornail, dry as a bone and sly as a fox, but they never came.

These aberrations would be inconsiderable were they not an index to the play's general quality. But Mr. Axelrod seems to have no style, save that of the Lux Radio Theatre. His sentiments are those of the advertising business. And he is without a shred of moral imagination, something rather more necessary to comedy than one would think. His sole resource would appear to be the gag—that efficient contemporary mechanism which assumes the audience to be a sort of collective Pavlov's dog, responding with grim and awful regularity to the tinny reverberations of the comic bell.

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It takes all the charm and beguiling personality of Tom Ewell, Vanessa Brown and Neva Patterson to propel Mr. Axelrod's little fable into a shadow of wit. But what is this small voice against the Handel chorus of praise which has greeted "The Seven Year Itch"? Already the tumbrils of Hollywood are in the streets, and the voice of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer is heard, crying in the wilderness. (*At the Fulton.*)

RICHARD HAYES.

THE SCREEN

GOOD FENCES MAKE GOOD NEIGHBORS

IT is interesting that several European film makers turn up at this time with movies suggesting that youngsters are smarter than their seniors, or, to put it negatively, that the trouble isn't so much with juvenile delinquency as with parental delinquency.

In "The White Line," an Italian movie directed with great compassion by Luigi Zampa, it is a group of children who make their elders realize the wrongness of artificial barriers which men set up to keep human beings apart. In 1947 a committee of international officers comes to a little Italian town near Trieste to draw a white line and set up barbed wire that will establish the new boundary between Yugoslavia and Italy.

This white line proves both funny and sad. It separates people and confuses loyalties; it runs right through the cemetery; it divides the church from the oratory; one poor farmer finds his house in one country and his fields in another. And this farmer's daughter (played by Gina Lollobrigida) finds herself on the opposite side of the line from the man who is "almost" her fiancé. While this young man is greatly upset, Gina is soon placated when her little brother (Enzo Stajola, who was the boy in "The Bicycle Thief") brings home a wounded refugee (Raf Vallone) from the other side, and in tending him she falls in love with him.

But through the town's children, the discord and confusion of the elders is reflected. The white line, cutting across a hill where they slide with their wagons, divides them into opposing groups. During the warfare that follows, Enzo is hurt by a stone; and all the kids are shocked that friend is fighting friend. But when they take down the marker that caused the trouble, an international incident follows. When tension increases between the adult factions, the children become frightened and elect Enzo to return the marker. In the dark of the night he is shot by a guard; and later all the people of this town realize they are responsible.

"The White Line" oversimplifies issues, of course, but as a movie, it is fascinating to watch; and while the lesson taught by the children probably won't stick, the theme is provocative and worthy of consideration.

MUCH more cynical in its attitude toward life, especially in the differences between children and adults, is "Forbidden Games." Expertly directed by Rene Clement, who got truly wonderful performances out of the two youngsters involved, this French film concentrates on a girl of six (played by Brigitte Fossey) and a boy of about ten (Georges Poujouly) whose game is the making of a cemetery for bugs and animals —complete with graves, crosses and decorations.

It all starts on a country road in France in 1940 when the girl and her parents are fleeing from the Nazis. The girl is much more upset by the death of her dog than that of her parents. She rescues its body and later, when she is picked up by a farmer's young son, she is consoled by his promise to give the dog a Christian burial. But the farmer's family have other troubles, and although they are kind to the orphan, they are more concerned over their older son, who lies dying, and their elder daughter, who is in love with a neighbor.

So the little girl and boy are left to their own devices, which consist mainly of enlarging their cemetery after they bury the dog and of stealing crosses from a real cemetery, from a church, and from the hearse used for the funeral of the farmer's son.

My quarrel with "Forbidden Games" is not so much with the children and their strange occupation (a tone of simple sincerity runs through this situation) but with the film's attitude, on the whole, toward things religious. Although the boy's family are ignorant peasants, I cannot believe that they would not know how to pray. But when the sick son is dying, they ask the young son to lead them in prayer, and he, being annoyed at them, scrambles the Our Father and Hail Mary. I found myself even more perplexed by the film's intentions during a later scene in church when the boy, having confessed his theft of the crosses to the priest, interrupts the saying of his Penance to steal the altar cross. Furthermore, the later behavior of the priest would indicate he is not too careful about keeping the seal of the confessional.

While I would not accuse the makers of "Forbidden Games" of being anti-clerical or anti-religious, I am sorry that their film has this tone of ill-will—particularly because of its moving, well-acted story and because it does point out so successfully that children have much to teach their elders about love. In spite of the film's cynicism, its finale is heartbreaking.

ALTHOUGH you couldn't call the boy and girl in "Two Cents Worth of Hope" children, they are young and joyful in spirit; and after the trying expe-

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rience through which they go in this Italian picture, they manage to tell off their elders quite effectively. The boy, exceedingly well played by Vincenzo Musolino, is just back from military service, and although he seems to be the sole support of his family, he cannot find a job. The girl, played by attractive, fiery Maria Fiore, is very much in love with the boy and wants to marry him although her father, who manufactures fireworks, has other plans for her.

The boy loves the girl too, but marriage seems far away for him; the poor kid, along with everything else, has to earn enough to pay for a dowry for his sister. But there's no downing him. He gets a job in the daytime helping the sacristan at church; and at night he posts billboards for the Communists. But his girl, who can't stand being taunted by the neighbors, talks too much about the night work; and consequently the boy loses both jobs. She's responsible for his losing his next job too—a very amusing situation in which he works for a widow who runs several moving picture theaters.

It's been a long time since we've seen an Italian comedy as funny as this one. Director Renato Castellani has handled his cast with understanding and warmth; and although some of the slapstick seems a little too involved and forced, the film's spirit is healthy and heartening. Once again there was a Confessional scene about which I became squeamish: it shows a priest hearing confessions from two sides of the box at the same time. The first thing you know, Americans are going to have some very peculiar ideas as to just what does go on before, after and during Confession. But in spite of this, "Two Cents Worth of Hope" is a delight to see. Could it be that Italian films are going to give their trouble-laden characters a rosy future now?

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

COMMUNICATIONS

"INDO-CHINA DILEMMA"

St. Paul, Minn.

I HAVE just received your November 21 edition of The Commonweal, and I am greatly interested in your editorial, "Indo-China Dilemma." There is one sentence especially which sums up the whole problem of Indo-China. It is: "Perhaps in the last analysis a specific and realistic timetable for gradual French withdrawal coupled with speeded-up training and equipment of native officers and units (plus guarantees of sustained international aid for the native defenders) would offer the greatest hope."

Upon speaking to several Vietnamese, I found that they picture their problem as a dilemma too, only of a different type. They have one real hatred, that is the French Foreign Legion. It is merely a matter of choosing Communism, which they know is bad, or remaining under the French Foreign Legion.

Here is where we reach the crux of the problem. All aid the United States gives to Indo-China goes to the French, who are hated by the Vietnamese; thus, the United States is supporting the very problem against which the Thirteen Colonies fought the Revolution—that of being under the control of a foreign power. To the average Vietnamese we look like a group of hypocrites who, after having gained our own freedom, send aid to France to keep the people of Vietnam under the power of France. The power of France is symbolized in the persons of the French Foreign Legion. The only alternative left for them is to join the Vietminh, which is the only group that seems to be doing anything to get rid of the Foreign Legion.

WALLACE M. OLSON.

"OUR PILGRIMAGE TO CHALMA"

Sunnyside, Washington

TO the Editors: The beautifully written report on Mr. Demarest's pilgrimage to Chalma, Mexico, reminds me of similar things which I saw in a chapel in Seville last summer. Lest we sit in superior judgment over these naive and primitive expressions of faith, let us remember that in one or another disguise such pre-rational expressions of religious urge are found everywhere. In 1922 and 1923 I watched Mahommedan pilgrims in the Sudan and later in Jacarta performing similar rites. William O. Douglas' latest book, *Beyond the High Himalayas,* reports facts (and interprets them to a certain extent) of the same order. The Eranos Circle of Professor Jung is throwing the first rays of light onto this collective subconscious form of religion, and it is high time that Victor White, Louis Bouyer and a few others be joined by more and more Catholic scholars in this field.

I suggest that these pre-rational urges find different expressions in different "climates." The snake handlers of our own South, some of the goings-on in our Protestant revivalist congregations and some aspects of what happens at lynchings show that from human sacrifice to mass killing the forms may change as the convictions, but something in the deep recesses of the sub-conscious and pre-rational is at work that the faiths illumined by an Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, or "reformed" by Luther and Calvin, still have to cope with.

This becomes a fearful menace if a political "leader" channels it and utilizes it. This should give us all pause. We ought to watch certain demagogues on their march to power and realize that the Church has done a successful job in rendering these urges harmless and even fruitful without suppressing them entirely.

(REV.) H. A. REINHOLD.

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A Critic, Not a Reviewer

THE SHORES OF LIGHT. By Edmund Wilson. Farrar, Straus & Young. $6.50.

By FRANK GETLEIN

PERIODICAL literary criticism becomes increasingly rare. What we get in its place is the book review, a flabby term, frequently nothing more than the palpitating response of the reviewer to a book, or the reviewer's private opinion on the subject of the book, or again his own opinion on literary art. The book review, in most journals and even in some dedicated entirely to books, is a disreputable branch of Fashion Notes. Especially welcome, then, is this ten-years' collection of literary criticism by Edmund Wilson.

The decade covered is the twenties. The principal source is the *New Republic,* of which Wilson was literary editor. The decade opened on the decline of Greenwich Village as Parnassus. The Village had had its fling; the real people were moving out to Cape Cod, to New Hope, to destinations unknown; their places were taken by determined poets and painters who put on the soiled linen of Bohemia with the enthusiasm and dedication that their bourgeois cousins were bringing to basket weaving and the making of pots. This pathetic and comic little backwater of the main current of American literature, Wilson recalls (or creates) with precise devastation. In sketching in this subject he relies not alone on criticism of specific works, but on burlesque and parodies of pseudo-Village life that can easily stand with Thurber and Benchley.

The decade closed on hard times and the rise of Soviet sympathy among the reviewers. Wilson, a critic, not a reviewer, had himself strong sympathy for Communism as a possible way out of the undeniable hole the country was in. But he was first a critic, impelled to reading the book before judging it, to judging it on its merits as a literary object. In a series of articles toward the end of this large collection, he examines the whole relationship of art to politics, particularly as it then affected the politically-aware literary worker. Put crudely, his conclusion is that the end does not justify the means; propaganda is all very well, and perhaps quite necessary, but if the literary thing is submitted to literary examination the ensuing description and evaluation must not be based on the desirability of a related political program. Here, stated negatively, is the touchstone of literary criticism. For Wilson it meant the elaboration of a distinction between Marxism and Stalinism, embarrassingly familiar to one accustomed to distinguish between the Church—and the countless silly actions done in the Church's name.

In saving these leaves from the burning, the author has taken the opportunity to retouch, to modify the first opinion, occasionally to conduct brief, interesting dialogues between Wilson now and Wilson then. On the whole there is surprisingly little change. The man today is more widely read, of course, and has lived longer; therefore he is much less anxious to jump the gun, to surrender to the first impulse of vexation. But the course is still continued, plotted in the opening essays of this book.

Having a valid critical habit, Wilson took it with him when he left the library. Some of the most fascinating pieces in the book recall and analyze the popular arts of those days. We see burlesque at its best contrasted vividly with the dull sex shows now bearing the name. There are two critical essays on Houdini, escape artist and (like Wilson himself) relentless exposer of fraud. And a telling pair of essays examines radio and the movies before and after the great transformation by advertising and real estate.

Wilson has made mistakes; his judgment of Edna St. Vincent Millay was much higher than it probably would have been had she not been his close friend. He does not always hew to his own perception of the critic's work. But he knows when he departs, his departures are very few and he always returns. This book of almost a hundred pieces could well be used as a critic's guide. Wilson is patient and humble before the material; always he wants to find out what it is. His own writing shows that reverence for word and syntax that the critic seeks, knows and defends.

Another View of Lincoln

ABRAHAM LINCOLN. By Benjamin P. Thomas. Knopf. $5.75.

By PAUL KINIERY

THE publishers of this volume are advertising it as the definitive one-volume life of Lincoln. Paul Angle, well known Lincoln authority, has referred to it as "the best one-volume biography of Abraham Lincoln that has ever been published." Associated for the past twenty years with the Abraham Lincoln Association in Springfield, Illinois, Dr. Thomas is associate editor of the *Abraham Lincoln Quarterly* and editorial adviser to the huge *Collected Works of Lincoln* project and also the author of at least two other books about Lincoln. The only liability apt to be associated with such familiarity with Lincoln is that of sympathy, perhaps too much sympathy. Few writers of biography are actually neutral toward their subjects, regardless of protestations to that affect.

So it is in this case, even though the work as a whole is admittedly excellent. There is no doubt that the author knows Lincoln extremely well, better than this reviewer. The book is as interesting as it is scholarly, despite the absence of footnotes. The little that is known of Lincoln's earlier years is given; the relationship between Lincoln and his wife is made understandable, even when Mary Lincoln was resorting to spiritualists for consolation, after Willie's death in 1862.

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FINISHED IN TIME FOR CHRISTMAS

A COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPELS

by Msgr. Ronald Knox

This is not one of those commentaries so full of Greek and Latin you wonder why the author bothered to put in any English at all nor is it on the sort of rich, deep dark problems Biblical scholars think up at their leisure, but on the sort of thing that trips ordinary readers like us—the evangelists' unfortunate way of occasionally appearing to contradict each other, the few really mysterious sayings of Our Lord that they just hand you without a hint of what they mean, the vaguely uneasy feeling that you would like to be sure whether the miracle you are reading about in Luke is the same one you read about in Matthew, and if so which of them put it in the wrong place. Msgr. Knox deals faithfully with all such matters as these, you will even be grateful for the answers to questions you hadn't thought of. One other point about this book: anyone you decide to give it to for Christmas is not likely to have read it already—it was only published the day before yesterday.

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AN APPEAL

The Maryknoll Sisters' Clinic reports that the numbers of homeless refugees have greatly increased in Pusan, South Korea; "the poorest of the people are dying of starvation." Funds for $5 food packages for the Clinic's "Adopt-a-Family" program, and donations of any amount, may be sent to: War Relief Services, National Catholic Welfare Conference, 350 Fifth Avenue, New York 1, N. Y.

However, in the critical period between the election and the inauguration, when Lincoln's attitude was a great, perhaps *the* great, determinant for peace or war, it seems to some students of the period that Lincoln was woefully lacking in judgment and perception. We know that he refused to recommend to the Republicans in Congress that they accept any part of the so-called Crittenden compromise. This is admitted by Dr. Thomas. No reference seems to be made to the other serious effort made under the chairmanship of former president Tyler to reach a compromise which both North and South would accept. Lincoln made no effort to promote acceptance. Thomas admits that Lincoln seemed unable to convince himself that war would break out unless someone was willing to compromise. Thomas goes so far as to make the following statements: "Lincoln asserted that the crisis was artificial. Perhaps his greatest blunder was that he misjudged, not so much the South's affection for the Union, but its superior feeling of state loyalty." This was really a rather serious "blunder" since the cost was the lives of six hundred thousand young men. Lincoln was the storm center; it was up to him to make a change if war was to be averted. However, the Republican platform of 1860 had declared that there was to be no extension of slavery into any territories.

Lincoln wrote, after the election, to the *Missouri Republican*: "I am not at liberty to shift my ground—that is out of the question." That position has never seemed to this reviewer a statesmanlike attitude to take. The platform of the Republican party was preserved; the nation went to war. Actually, there was no longer any more territory where slavery would have been agriculturally profitable; a concession by Lincoln would really have meant nothing to the institution of slavery as such but it would probably have made the Civil War unnecessary and avoidable. Lincoln was admittedly a great man by 1865; whether he was a great man in 1861 is definitely open to serious debate. Dr. Thomas seems to admire Lincoln too much to offer much criticism of him.

A Lass in Love

A TIME OUTWORN. By Val Mulkerns. Devin Adair. $3.

By WILLIAM B. RILEY

VAL Mulkerns' first novel leaves the reader with the feeling that he has just finished the letters of a sensitive and perceptive young girl to her best friend. Not that the novel relies on this device for its effect; rather, because many of the best things about it and some of the not-so-good seem to be inherent in a story told so personally, directly, and sometimes, not very carefully.

On the good side, Miss Mulkerns succeeds in setting out unpretentiously and freshly some of the more amusing facets of life in her native Ireland—especially country-village Ireland. Her ear is attuned for the nuances of Irish talk, such as that of her landlady in Ballybrophy, a small town in Tipperary. "I was seventeen years of age when the

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mother died on me and I went to an aunt in the city of Waterford, God be good to her. A cancer put an end to her, the creature."

Miss Mulkerns is also good at poking fun. Her descriptions of two young Americans on a tour of Ireland are fine tongue-in-cheek work. The pointed, friendly job on old Father Tom, pastor in Ballybrophy, whose chief avocation is chasing young lovers from dark lanes at ten o'clock of each evening, is delightfully done.

The story itself concerns Maeve Cusack, the narrator, a girl in her late teens, who is very much in love with Diarmuid Barron. Through a combination of circumstances, they are separated, and while they are apart, Diarmuid is seduced by one of Maeve's closest friends. Almost because of this, Maeve becomes engaged to the local schoolmaster in Ballybrophy.

The faults in this book are almost inextricably interwoven with its good points. All of the characters are drawn pointedly and economically, but the protagonists have little more depth and fulness than those incidental characters who wander in and out of the story. The descriptions are carefully done, but sometimes they slide off into cataloging. The closeness we feel towards Maeve leaves us with a lack of conviction that her sorrows are really tragic, and a vague sense that the whole affair is only an overdramatized case of puppy-love.

There are places in the novel when the reader is surprised by the author's power of description. "A whiff of beautiful icy wind blew into my face and there was a dazzle of frosty starlight. The stars had been dim through the coated glass, but now they made the twisted flame of the candle look pallid and spent . . . Gratefully I hung out through the window in the pure frozen air and looked along the length of the cobbled starlit street. It was beautiful, with its softly shadowed rows of small houses, each with a pointed porch, and the gracefully tapered Gothic lines of the church rising whitely at the far end. A cat streaked dark across the cobbles, sprang with perfect restrained grace at a low roof, and disappeared over the top . . . as I leaned out in the cold air a sharp sense of excitement caught me by the throat, and I felt like singing."

Unfortunately, passages as good as this are sparsely scattered. There are enough of them, though, to cause a reader to wonder if Miss Mulkerns can put together a story as good all the way through as this one is in places.

Love in Ireland

HONEY SEEMS BITTER. By Benedict Kiely. *Dutton.* $3.

By EMMET LAVERY

WHEN it comes to sex, the Irish can be as sad about it as the next man. Only Frank O'Connor seems to be able to laugh about it.

So here is one more novel on the dark and brooding side of lovers' lane. The writer is a gifted story teller. He evokes all of the anguish,

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WINTER ISSUE (JANUARY 1ST)

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DOM SEBASTIAN MOORE

These articles are amongst others by the Abbot of Downside, Revd. Fr. Francis H. Drinkwater, A. H. N. Green-Armytage, Eric John, and John M. Todd in the Autumn and Winter numbers of

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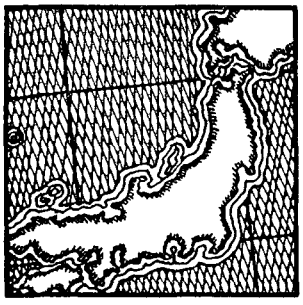
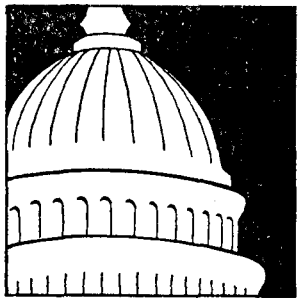


This week's issue suggests one striking reason why The Commonweal makes such a good Christmas present. Douglas Hyde's first-hand report on conditions in Malta and Robert Barrat's dispatch on current French opinion regarding America are typical of The Commonweal's informative coverage from many lands.

POLITICS HERE AND ABROAD

Commonweal articles present situations, issues and personalities from all sections of this country and from Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America. The editors and contributors recognize, morever, that a sound way to broaden one's own personal horizon is through authentic glimpses of very limited locales here and overseas.



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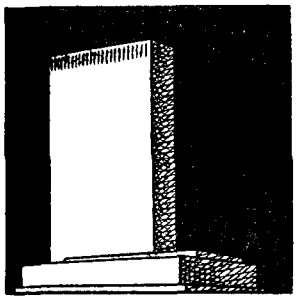

Another is to direct attention to the many activities of the United Nations, which will have so much to do with the fate of future generations. The Commonweal also faces the implications of the insatiable ambitions of the Soviet Union, and all the things American technicians can do in the world's undeveloped areas.

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the torture, the self-doubts, the wild dreams and the deep despairs. And he leaves you, at the end, with the smell of stale beer in the nostrils.

What is love like for a pretty and fashionable girl like Emily Royal? Is it merely the difference between the violence of dashing George Butler and the nonviolence of gentle Donagh Hartigan, the sensitive lad recovering from a nervous breakdown? This is the question which Mr. Kiely considers against the background of a rural murder, with which some of the characters are involved.

For a lyric moment Emily chooses Donagh rather than George and, for Donagh if not for Emily, the honey seems bitter. Donagh has the feeling that this was love by proxy and, if George had been less violent, Emily would have accepted him instead of Donagh.

There is a self-consciously earthy quality about the story which becomes a little obvious after a while. It is all in character, as far as the gentle Donagh is concerned, but the air in the pubs gets a bit thick. A strong wind blowing would be a relief at times.

Religion, Psychology

CONFLICT AND LIGHT. Edited by Fr. Bruno de Jesus-Marie, O. C. D. Translated by P. Caswell and C. Hastings. Sheed and Ward. $2.75.

By RUDOLF ALLERS

THE preface to the French original of this book, which is not translated, states that the essays included in this volume are part of the papers read and discussed at the Fifth International Congress for Psychology of Religion, which convened in September 1948 at Avon-Fontainebleau. Missing in the translation are also a letter by Padre Gemelli and two articles which have been omitted, probably because they would require illustrations. Their inclusion would have shown the scope of the problems this group considers.

The translation reads well, though a number of inaccuracies sometimes distort the meaning. It is difficult

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to see why, for instance, the title of the study by Dr. Françoise Dolto: "How a False Sense of Guilt Is Created in Children," clearly indicative of the responsibility on the part of educators, should be rendered: "How Children Acquire a False Sense of Guilt," in which this reference is suppressed. Even a rapid comparison with the original reveals many such errors. In rendering ideas concerned with matters as difficult and subtle as those treated in these articles great attention ought to be given to absolute accuracy.

There are two parts. One, *"Darkness and Sin,"* comprises studies by Monsignor Journet, "Sin as Fault and Offence," by Father Beinart, S. J., "Sin and the Christian Sense of Guilt," by Dr. Dolto and Father Philippe de la Trinité, O. C. D., "Objective and Subjective Morality," by R. Allers, "Some Psychological Aspects of Confession," by Father Cossa, and C. H. Nodet on "Guilt and Mental Troubles."

The second part, *"Balance and Light,"* consists of articles by G. Thibon, "Piety Towards the World" (a mistranslation of "Cosmic Deepening of Piety"), by C. Baudouin, "Angelism and False Transcendance," E. de Greef, "Affectivity and Spirituality," M. de Corte, "Incarnation and Pseudo-Incarnation," Father Gabriel de Ste. Marie-Madeleine, "Present Norms of Holiness," by Father Lucien-Marie de St. Joseph, "Ascesis of Light." The collaborators are theologians, philosophers, psychologists, and psychiatrists.

The slender volume gives evidence of the fruitfulness of such a collaboration, which demonstrates the need all concerned with these most important questions must feel for information and assistance from those who look at things, each from his own angle. Those responsible for pastoral care and education will profit by becoming better acquainted with certain facts and experiences; psychologists and psychiatrists will realize the significance of the religious factor, both as a determinant of human conduct and as a means for achieving a satisfactory way of life. Particularly, it becomes clear that spiritual and psychological guidance are in no way opposed to each other, and that cooperation is possible as well as necessary if, all overlapping notwithstanding, the boundaries are realized.

Although not easy reading—"all things may be made clear but not all may be made easy"—the study of this book will prove rewarding, not only for the specialist, whether theologian or psychologist, but for the general public. It may help to dispel prejudices and clarify questions on which indeed, far too many have hazy and often false ideas.

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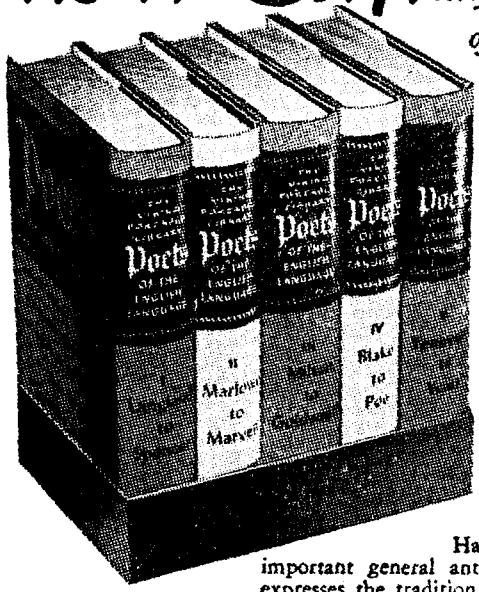

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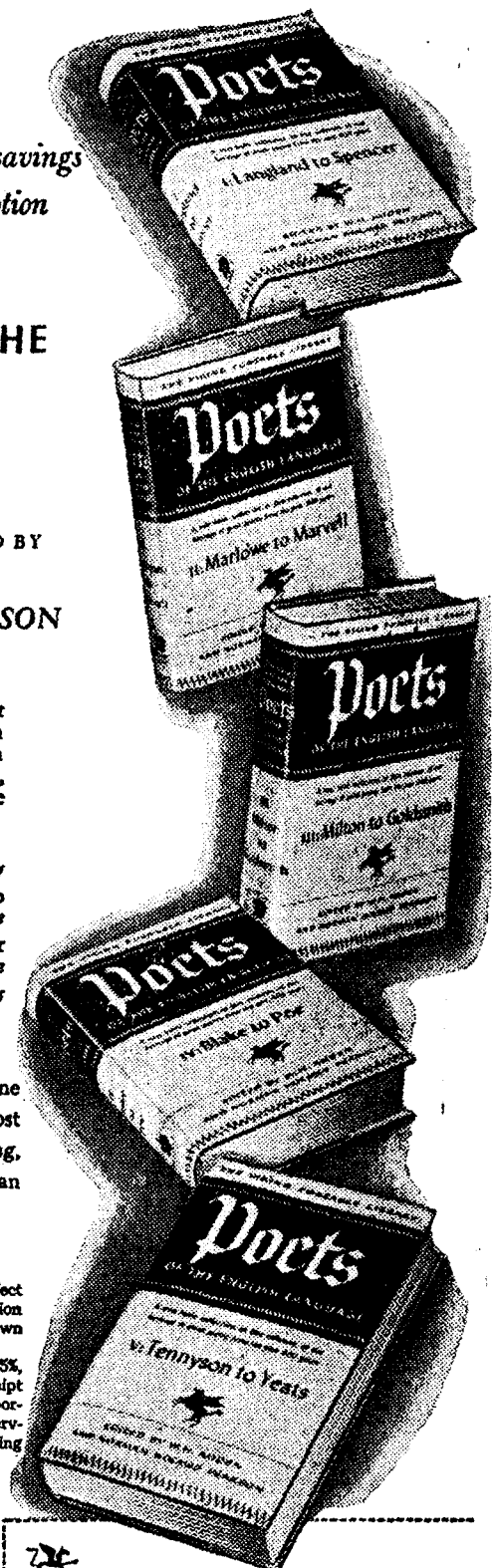

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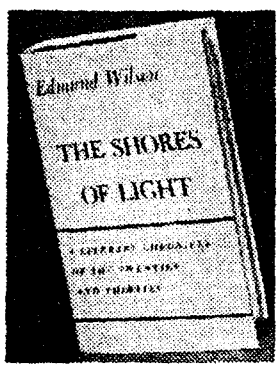

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